

**REMARKS**

In response to the Office Communication Action mailed November 7, 2003, applicants are filing an RCE and a substitute specification, claims and abstract of the disclosure. Applicants' attorney certifies that the substitute specification, claims and abstract of the disclosure do not contain any new matter.

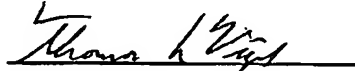
Applicants are also adding a new claim 19 and submitting an IDS PTO form 1449 together with four U.S. Patents and one European Patent.

The European Patent is in German and the relevancy of same is set forth in the second full paragraph of the substitute specification. In this respect, EP 0 429 888 B1 describes virtual concatenation subsystem units for bit rates of an intermediate hierarchical order, where the respective pointer value for each container is used on the transmission-side, but during transmission it is possible for different propagation times for the (sub)containers to occur which are caused, for example, by means of network elements in the transmission path. At the end of the virtually concatenated transmission, such propagation time differences are equalized.

Since this reference is merely background art, applicants are not submitting an English translation of same. However, upon receiving a request from the Examiner for an English translation of this reference, applicants will be happy to provide same.

Applicant submits that the amended substitute specification, claims and abstract of the disclosure are in proper U.S. form, the claims are clear of the prior art, and the application is otherwise in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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